

Three ways to receive Holy Communion at OLM.

Receiving Holy Communion in the conventional American way: One option is the conventional American way of standing and holding out your hands to receive the host in your hands. Please note, this way of receiving Communion has its issues. First, one should form a throne with their hands, palms up, cupped slightly, and one beneath the other. The idea is to make a place for the priest or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to place a consecrated host in your hand with no danger of the host falling to the floor. Don't place your hands in a V, because we fear the Eucharist might fall between your hands. Instead, your hands should form a cup, so there is no possibility of the Eucharist falling. Secondly, anyone who receives in the hand should then and there receive Communion immediately, taking the host from their palm with their other hand, and immediately putting the host in their mouth. Sadly, there are issues where folks are walking away with the host in their hands and then not receiving, and so our ushers and altar servers may follow those folks and insist that they receive. This can be embarrassing, so we're sorry, but we are very serious about this. Most of the time these are non-Catholics who are confused, and who shouldn't be receiving Holy Communion in the Catholic Church at all. Very rarely, however, the hosts have been stolen by anti-Catholics. So we must be careful.



Receiving Holy Communion on the tongue, but standing: Next there is the option to stand, but to receive on the tongue. Those who would like to kneel, but who can't, may choose this option. Sometimes these folks don't trust their trembling hands any more, and just feel safer receiving on the tongue. That said, there are some issues here too. Please don't stick your tongue out so that your tongue points downward, because we want to place the host on your tongue in such a way that the host never falls to the floor. Our altar servers are there to help us if a host falls, but we still want to guard against that possibility. Secondly, let the minister put the host on your tongue and move their fingers out of the way before you close your mouth, they do not want to be licked or bitten.

Receiving Holy Communion in the traditional way: Finally, there is the more traditional option of kneeling and receiving on the tongue. Read above regarding receiving on the tongue, and again, let the priest or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion move their fingers before you close your mouth. The Vatican tells us that we cannot forbid Catholics from receiving Holy Communion in this traditional way of kneeling and receiving on the tongue, so our parish

provides the kneelers. Those administering Holy Communion try to stand to the side of these kneelers for the sake of those who want to walk up to receive standing, while also standing nearby the kneelers so they can swivel over to give Communion to those kneeling. By standing to the side of the kneeler our ministers of Holy Communion hope to minimize any tripping hazards.

Receiving a blessing instead: Catholics who cannot receive Holy Communion for whatever reason (perhaps they ate before Mass, need to go to confession or perhaps they are in an irregular marriage) or non-Catholics who shouldn't receive Holy Communion do not have to come forward, but many will. If you choose to do this, please cross your hands over your chest like an X, as this helps the priest or deacon know to give you a blessing instead.

We know that there is a lot of talk about how we receive Holy Communion out there on the internet, and some of it can be quite judgmental. By comparison, our parish tries not to judge, and we make all these options available for everyone. One thing, however, that is not negotiable, is the Church's teaching on the Eucharist. When we receive Holy Communion, we are communing with Christ himself, truly present - body, blood, soul and divinity. So we should always prepare to receive Holy Communion. We need to confess any grave sins before presenting ourselves for Communion, and we need to always receive Holy Communion with reverence, and joy, but also with a healthy level of fear and trembling.